

	<i>sumatrana</i> Sumatra	<i>borneana</i> Borneo	<i>borneana</i> Borneo (ex Singapore)	<i>koratensis</i> Thailand (ex Singapore)
Wing:	53-56	53-54	55-56	52-54
	54.60	53.33	55.33	53.33
	39-45	38-40	42-43	40-44
Tail:	42.20	39	42.67	42.33
	11.9-13.1	11.1-11.8	12-13.8	12-12.9
Culmen:	12.50	11.45	12.93	12.57

♀ Wing: *phoenicotis* (Java): 52, 53, 54; *bantenensis*, juv. (Udjung Kulon): 54; *sumatrana* (Sumatra): 52, 53, 53;

Tail: *phoenicotis* (Java): 38, 40, 41; *bantenensis*, juv. (Udjung Kulon): 45; *sumatrana* (Sumatra): 36, 39, 42;

Culmen; *phoenicotis* (Java): 11.9, 12.1, 13.2; *bantenensis*, juv. (Udjung Kulon): 11.5; *sumatrana* (Sumatra): 12, 12.3, 13.2.

Max., min. and average measurements:

	<i>phoenicotis</i> Java	<i>bantenensis</i> Udjung Kulon	<i>sumatrana</i> Sumatra
Wing:	52-54	54	52-53
	53		52.67
	38-41		36-42
Tail:	39.67	45	39
	11.9-13.2		12-13.20
Culmen:	12.40	11.50	12.50

Reference:

- ¹ Boden Kloss, C. On the Ruby-Cheek with descriptions of three new subspecies; *Journal Federated Malay States Museums*, 10, 1921, p. 208-10.

Subspecific variation in *Macronyx ameliae* de Tarragon

by P. A. CLANCEY

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The decorative Pink-throated Longclaw *Macronyx ameliae* de Tarragon has an extended and rather disrupted distribution in eastern, central and south-eastern Africa, from the highlands of Kenya south-east to the Natal coast. Variation in this terrestrial species is generally conceded as being slight, and opinion among systematists is about equally divided as to the desirability or otherwise of recognising races. Those workers who do admit geographical races recognise two subspecies, namely, *M.a.ameliae* de Tarragon, 1845: Durban, Natal, and *M.a.wintoni* Sharpe, 1891: Kitoto Plain, Kavirondo, Kenya.

As is often the case in grass-haunting pipits, study of variation in *M.ameliae* is made difficult by the abrasive action coarse grass has on the plumage, and the colour leaching effected by the intense African sun. In this longclaw the issue is further complicated by the presence of a protracted nuptial moult in the male, in which the dorsal plumage is apparently

not completely moulted at one time, but progressively throughout the whole period of nidification. This results in the mantle and scapulars of breeding males actually being a patchwork of sun-faded and worn and freshly moulted feathers. Meaningful study of variation must, therefore, be restricted to material consisting of freshly moulted birds. Study of such from many parts of the species' range (collected mainly between April and July) reveals that *M.ameliae* varies significantly in general size as revealed in standard wing- and tail-length measurements, the length of the bill, the degree to which the upperparts are streaked with black, the colour of the pale fringes to the back (mantle and scapular) feathers, and the extent to which the inner vane of the outermost rectrix is invaded with dusky. I can see no constant variation between population groups as regards the degree to which the ventral surface of the male is coloured with deep rose, which varies extensively individually, not only in the depth or nuance of the pigment but also in the extent of its distribution.

Most workers who have recognised races in *M.ameliae* have been content to rely on differences in bill-length measurements alone [see mainly Benson (1955)], but Chapin (1953) has drawn attention to rather darker dorsal coloration in the Katangese and Zambian populations. Even more recently, Ripley and Heinrich (1966) have further demonstrated the existence of significant variation in the degree of greyish or dusky wedging to the inner vane of the outermost rectrix.

A recent study of *M.ameliae* and its variation carried out in the Durban Museum shows that three races require to be admitted in this species, these being as follows:

(a) **Macronyx ameliae ameliae** de Tarragon

Macronyx ameliae de Tarragon, *Rev. Zool.*, 1845, p. 452: Port Natal, i.e., Durban, Natal.

Margining to feathers of upperparts in freshly moulted dress about Sudan Brown [Ridgway (1912), pl. iii], the broad centres black. In tail, the outermost rectrices largely plain white, the dusky wash to the inner vane restricted to the basal third.

Wings of 10 ♂♂ 96–98 (96.5), culmens from base 20–22 (20.7) tails 75–81.5 (78.2), 3 ♀♀ wings 90, 91.5, 92.5, culmens 20 (2), 21, tails 70, 74 (2) mm.

Specimens examined: 23. (Natal, 3; Zululand, 5; southern Moçambique (north to Inhambane), 15).

Range: Coastal Natal (where now rare), eastern Zululand along the coast, and the Moçambique littoral north to about the Save R., but limits not determined.

(b) **Macronyx ameliae altanus** Clancey

Macronyx ameliae altanus Clancey, *Durban Mus. Novit.*, vol. vii, 12, 1966, p. 528: Mayau, northern Kabompo district, Zambia.

Similar in coloration to the last taxon, but smaller in size, shorter billed, and with the inner vane of the outermost rectrix marked with a dusky wedge-shaped area which is extended over the basal two-thirds.

Wings of 10 ♂♂ 90–94.5 (92.2), culmens from base 18–19.5 (18.6), tails 70–78 (73.0), wings of 10 ♀♀ 85–90 (87.4), culmens 17–19 (18.2), tails 65–72.5 (69.6) mm.

Specimens examined: 78. [Rhodesia, 20; Botswana, 1; Caprivi Strip, 4; Zambia, 50; Malawi, 2; northern Moçambique (Quelimane), 1].

Range: The plateau of Rhodesia, northern Botswana (Bechuanaland), including Ngamiland, the Caprivi and perhaps north-eastern South-West Africa along the Okavango R., to Angola, Zambia, the Katanga, Congo, Malawi, northern Moçambique, and south-western Tanzania.

(c) **Macronyx ameliae wintoni** Sharpe

Macronyx wintoni Sharpe, *Ibis*, 1891, p. 444 and p. 589: Kitoto Plain, Kavirondo, Kenya.

Similar in size, bill-length and the extent to which the inner vane of the outermost rectrix is wedged with dusky to *M.a.altanus*, but differs in freshly moulted plumage in both sexes, as well as in males in newly assumed nuptial dress, by being less heavily streaked with black on the upperparts. The streaks on the forehead and crown are narrower and not confluent, and those on the hind neck finer, while the rump and upper tail-coverts are less strongly spotted with black. Edging to feathers of the whole of the dorsal surface paler, and less saturated reddish, being about Buckthorn Brown (pl. xv), as against Sudan Brown. Usually less heavily striated over the sides of the breast and flanks, and ♀♀ less intensely streaked over upper breast.

Wings of 8 ♂♂ 89–94 (91.5), culmens from base 17–18.5 (17.8), tails 68.5–74 (71.0), wings of 4 ♀♀ 86–91 (88.1), culmen of one 17.5, tail 75 mm.

Specimens examined: 12. (Tanzania, 1; Kenya, 11).

Range: Central and northern Tanzania north from about Tabora, the highlands of Kenya, and perhaps extreme eastern Uganda.

Ripley and Heinrich, writing on Tanzanian *M.a.wintoni*, note that their males have narrowly streaked rather than a mainly black band across the upper breast, in contrast to the published description of the male by Mackworth-Praed and Grant (1955). The difference between the two findings results from the changes wrought by the restricted but protracted nuptial moult of the male, during which the brownish-buff, sepia streaked upper breast feathers of the non-breeding dress are replaced by others with the apical half black and the basal portion white. In well-coloured adults, the rose of the throat and medio-ventral plane may bleed to the white portions of these breast feathers. Breeding males of *M.ameliae* are almost invariably in a condition of contour plumage moult. The wing and tail feathers are, however, not changed during nidification, and become excessively eroded as the season advances, the wing-tip losing as much as *c.* 10–12 mm. as a result of abrasion and feather desiccation.

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Comments on *Ammomanes burra* Bangs

by P. A. CLANCEY

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The status of the uncommon and localised Red Lark of southern Africa named *Ammomanes burra* by Bangs (1930) has given rise to much diversity of opinion over the years, but Lawson (1961) has shown more or less convincingly that it is no more than a well-marked race of the wide-ranging and highly plastic *Certhilauda albescens* (Lafresnaye). Despite recent objections to this finding, I find no cogent reasons for not admitting the validity of Lawson's conclusions in this regard, and the form is so treated in Clancey (1966). Alleged differences in the song and general biology do not detract materially from the case for considering *A. burra* a race of *C. albescens*, a conclusion based on the following: (a) the marked similarity in the general coloration and the degree and distribution of the ventral spotting between *A. burra* and *C. a. cavei* Macdonald (the two taxa are only consistently separable on the basis of bill shape and size and differences in dimensions). Furthermore, (b) *A. burra* and the forms of *C. albescens* of most authors are allopatric, while (c) the fact that *A. burra* interbreeds, albeit narrowly, with *C. a. karruensis* (Roberts) to the south of its range is indisputable proof of its true status. Incidentally, the intergrades between *A. burra* and *C. a. karruensis*, all mainly from the district of Brandvlei, were described as a distinct species (*Pseudammomanes harei*) by Roberts, in 1937. The fact that *A. burra* shares with a contiguous race of *C. albescens* a like reddish sandy dorsal facies, distinctive facial pattern, clear white underparts with the large black spots massed on the chest (*C. a. cavei*), and is known to interbreed with another (*C. a. karruensis*), leaves little room for the critics of the conspecificity of these lark forms in which to manoeuvre.

Bang's *A. burra* was proposed as a *nom. nov.* for *Alauda ferruginea* Lafresnaye, 1839, pre-occupied by *Alauda ferruginea* A. S. Voigt, 1831. Lafresnaye's *Type*, which is also the *Type* of *A. burra* is of unknown provenience apart from "South Africa". At the same time as Lafresnaye described the Red Lark, Dr. Andrew Smith again named the species on examples collected by himself on the Bushman Flats, in the north-western Cape Province, and using, by co-incidence also in 1839, the same name as employed by Lafresnaye. Most authors overlook this double naming of